

maintained. They really don't cost money. They are donated space. The travel time is of concern, however, and that is one consideration that came up in the hearing, but I think, you know, I guess I am of a mind and I did talk to Kermit McMurry after a vote yesterday, that he preferred and expressed to me, and so I will share it with you, that we not vote for an amendment like Senator Moore is talking about to give him the flexibility to deal with the situation. With the, hopefully, the money reinserted, he will have more flexibility in this area but he is not at this time prepared to know how best to deal with that. So I guess I again want to express...I know Senator Warner talked about some things and I would like to refer back to that, but Kermit McMurry and the department have been outstanding in working with us. They have been very open-minded. They came back with an alternative plan that was much better than the original. They have been very cooperative about the committee's compromise and reinserting the money for the local staff. They have bent over backwards to work with us and I guess I am kind of suggesting that they have dealt with us in good faith and have been very reasonable in waiting for the Legislature to make a decision and I have been very pleased with their attitude. So when he suggests that maybe we ought not to reinsert that language, I am suggesting that I think he had handled it pretty well, although I am more than happy to have it back in, too. I guess I will live with it either way. I think the main question is having the staff out there. You can have offices open but if you have no staff, there is no way to help, so we saw the central issue as the staff, having the people there to help and then how they reach out to those people was really a question that we thought the department might best be able to answer. It does tie in with what Reverend Jackson was talking about, obviously, you know, his concerns about economic justice. I think clearly this issue that we are considering at this point, not necessarily the Moore amendment, but the bill itself, is an economic justice issue. Are we to deny across the state equal access to care and services and programs that are available that this Legislature has established? Are some areas to be served better than others? Are some people to have more ready ability to retain and access care and assistance than others in this state? I think that is really the fundamental issue and I guess what we are saying and I'm really pleased and proud of this Legislature for advancing this bill yesterday. We are saying, no, we want equity, we want equal opportunity, we want justice in terms of our access to the services we think are important to maintain our people in this state, and those Social Service programs that we have established, I think, are